

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /026 W

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R 180249Z FEB 75

FM AMEMBASSY MANILA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0650

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY SAIGON

AMEMBASSY SEOUL

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

CINCPAC

CINCPACAF

DOD

JCS

S E C R E T MANILA 2053

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, RP

SUBJECT: PROPOSED REORGANIZATION OF USAF IN WESTERN PACIFIC

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

1. CINCPACAF GENERAL WILSON, ACCOMPANIED BY 13TH AF GENERAL MANOR, BRIEFED ME FEBRUARY 15 CONCERNING THEIR PROPOSALS FOR REORGANIZATION OF U.S. AIR FORCES IN THE WESTERN PACIFIC. AS I UNDERSTAND THEIR PROPOSALS, THEY RECOMMEND THAT UPON DISSOLUTION OF PACAF JULY 1, ALL U.S. AIR FORCE UNITS AND INSTALLATIONS IN EAST ASIA (WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THOSE DEDICATED EXCLUSIVELY TO MAC AND SAC) BE PLACED UNDER THE ADMINISTRATIVE AND OPERATIONAL COMMAND OF THE 13TH AF, LOCATED AT CLARK FIELD IN THE PHILIPPINES. MOREOVER, THEY PROPOSE TO ESTABLISH AT CLARK A SUBORDINATE SECURITY ASSISTANCE COMMAND, WHICH WOULD HAVE THE TASK OF MAKING USAF MORE RESPONSIVE TO THE MAP NEEDS OF MAP RECIPIENT COUNTRIES IN EAST ASIA WHICH FLY OBSOLESCENT AIRCRAFT. IN LIGHT OF THESE ENHANCED RESPONSIBILITIES,

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THEY PROPOSE THAT 13TH AF BE HEADED BY A FOUR STAR GENERAL

AND SUGGEST GENERAL WILSON FOR THAT COMMAND.

2. GENERAL WILSON ASSURES ME THAT THIS RECOMMENDATION IS THE MOST EFFICIENT AND COST-EFFECTIVE MEANS OF CONTROLLING U.S. AIR ASSETS IN EAST ASIA AND THE MOST LOGICAL FROM THE USAF POINT OF VIEW. HE RECOGNIZED THAT THERE WOULD BE POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS THAT WOULD HAVE TO BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT AND ASKED FOR MY REACTIONS TO THE PLAN.

3. I TOLD GENERAL WILSON THAT I COULD THINK OF FOUR CONSIDERATIONS THAT WOULD HAVE TO BE ADDRESSED BY WASHINGTON AND FELT THERE MIGHT BE MORE WHICH WOULD ARISE FROM U.S. CONGRESSIONAL ATTITUDES. THE FOUR I ENUMERATED WERE AS FOLLOWS:

A. THE JAPANESE AND KOREAN GOVERNMENTS MIGHT HAVE RESERVATIONS ABOUT U.S. AIR FORCE ASSETS IN THEIR COUNTRIES BEING CONTROLLED AND COMMANDED FROM THE PHILIPPINES. (GENERAL WILSON SAID THERE MIGHT BE SYMBOLIC RETENTION OF 5TH AF HEADQUARTERS TO MEET THIS ISSUE.)

B. CONVERSELY, THE PHILIPPINES MIGHT BE SKITTISH ABOUT HARBORING A HEADQUARTERS WHICH WOULD HAVE ASSIGNED RESPONSIBILITIES IN NORTHEAST ASIA, AND, BY REFERENCE, BE INVOLVED IN CONFLICTS EXTERNAL TO DIRECT PHILIPPINE INTERESTS.

C. TO MOST OBSERVERS, THE IDEA OF ABOLISHING PACAF IN HAWAII, BUT TRANSFERRING ITS COMMANDER AND MOST OF ITS RESPONSIBILITIES TO CLARK, WOULD APPEAR TO BE A SIMPLE WESTWARD TRANSLOCATION OF CINCPACAF. THIS WOULD OBVIOUSLY HAVE REPERCUSSIONS NOT ONLY IN THE U.S. CONGRESS AND U.S. PRESS, BUT ALSO IN VARIOUS CHANCERIES AROUND THE WORLD. IT COULD NOT BE ASSESSED PURELY IN TERMS OF ADMINISTRATIVE EFFICIENCY.

D. FINALLY, THE ENHANCEMENT OF 13TH AF AND THE RANK OF ITS COMMANDER WOULD CERTAINLY CONVINCE THE PHILIPPINES THAT CLARK HAD BECOME A MORE VALUABLE PROPERTY TO THE U.S., AND WHATEVER WE MIGHT SAVE IN EFFICIENCY MIGHT

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EVENTUALLY BE OUTWEIGHED BY THE INCREASED "COST" OF CLARK, EITHER IN TERMS OF AN EXPANDED MAP QUID PRO QUO, OR POSSIBLY OF RENTALS IF MAP IS TERMINATED.

4. ON THE OTHER HAND, I TOLD GENERAL WILSON THAT I THOUGHT THE SECURITY ASSISTANCE SUB-COMMAND WAS AN EXCELLENT IDEA, PARTICULARLY IF IT INVOLVED STOCKPILING AND WAREHOUSING SPARES AND EQUIPMENT UNDER USAF LOGISTICS CONTROL AND

ACCOUNTABILITY, RATHER THAN LEAVING THEM TO THE INEFFICIENT BOOKKEEPING AND BLACK MARKETS OF MAP RECIPIENT COUNTRIES IN SOUTHEAST ASIA. THERE WOULD APPEAR TO BE NO PARTICULAR POLITICAL IMPLICATION OF BASING IT AT CLARK.

5. OUR CONVERSATION CONCLUDED WITH SOME CONCEPTUAL DISCUSSION OF ALTERNATIVES. I TOLD GENERAL WILSON THAT A CONCEPTUAL CASE COULD BE MADE TO SUGGEST THAT OUR LOCAL FORCES IN EAST ASIA WERE NO LONGER PRIMARILY CONCERNED WITH A MONOLITHIC THREAT FROM THE ASIAN MAINLAND, BUT TWO DISCRETE LOCAL SITUATIONS CENTERED ON OBSCURE MENTALITIES RESIDENT IN HANOI AND PYONGYANG. IN THAT CASE, TWO SEPARATE BUT EQUAL THREE STAR USAF COMMANDS, REPORTING BACK TO TAC, MIGHT SEEM MORE RESPONSIVE TO THE CIRCUMSTANCES. GENERAL WILSON, ON THE OTHER HAND, FELT THAT THE SYMBOLISM OF REMOVING THE ONLY FOUR STAR AIR FORCE BILLET FROM THE PACIFIC MIGHT CONVEY A SIGNAL OF WITHDRAWAL WHICH WOULD BE DESTABILIZING. HE WONDERED WHETHER A FOUR STAR 13TH AF HEADQUARTERS AT GUAM WOULD OFFER A COMPROMISE WHICH WOULD FINESSE MOST OF THE POLITICAL PROBLEMS BUT PRESERVE THE ADMINISTRATIVE AND COMMAND EFFICIENCY WHICH IS THE USAF OBJECTIVE.

6. GENERAL WILSON ADVISED ME THAT HE WOULD REPORT OUR CONVERSATION TO GENERAL JONES AND I ADVISED HIM THAT I WOULD SEND THIS CABLE SO THAT MY COLLEAGUES IN OTHER INTERESTED POSTS COULD PROVIDE THE DEPARTMENT WITH THEIR VIEWS. PRESUMABLY ALL THESE CONSIDERATIONS WOULD THEN BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT WHEN THE WASHINGTON SECURITY COMMUNITY EXAMINES THE PACAF PROPOSALS IN THE NEAR FUTURE.

7. ACTION REQUESTED: REQUEST DEPARTMENT INITIATE DISCUSSIONS WITH DOD AND JCS TO ASSURE THAT VARIOUS
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POLITICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS ARE ADDRESSED IN WASHINGTON DISCUSSIONS OF PROPOSED PACAF REORGANIZATION. BEFORE FINAL DECISIONS ARE MADE, I SHOULD LIKE OPPORTUNITY TO REVIEW AND COMMENT UPON THEM INsofar AS THEY AFFECT THE PHILIPPINES.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: REORGANIZATIONS, AIR FORCE
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 18 FEB 1975
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975MANILA02053
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750058-0241
From: MANILA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750235/aaaabftk.tel
Line Count: 160
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 15 JUL 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <15 JUL 2003 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <16 JUL 2003 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PROPOSED REORGANIZATION OF USAF IN WESTERN PACIFIC CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD
TAGS: MARR, MORG, RP, XP, US, (WILSON)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006